

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of authenticating a user of a client computer  
5 at a server computer executing a distributed application on  
a plurality of data processing agents, comprising the steps  
of:  
receiving a service request from the user at a first  
data processing agent;  
10 submitting an authentication request from the first  
data processing agent to a second data processing agent to  
authenticate the user;  
receiving a response to the authentication request at  
the first data processing agent from the second data  
15 processing agent; and  
if the received response indicates that the user is  
successfully authenticated, providing the requested service  
to the user.
- 20 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the received response  
includes a level of access privileges for the user, and the  
providing step includes the step of determining the service  
provided to the user based upon the user's access privilege  
level.
- 25 3. The method of claim 1, further including the steps of  
receiving the service request from the user at the first  
data processing agent included in a first server, and  
submitting the authentication request from the first data

processing agent to the second data processing agent included in a second server.

4. A system for authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, the system comprising:

a server including a first data processing agent for receiving a service request from the user and a second data processing agent for authenticating the user,

wherein the first data processing agent includes resources for submitting an authentication request to the second data processing agent to authenticate the user, and

wherein the second data processing agent includes resources for receiving the authentication request, attempting to authenticate the user, and transmitting a response indicative of whether the user is successfully authenticated to the first data processing agent.

5. A method of authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, comprising the steps of:

receiving a first service request from the user at a first data processing agent;

submitting an authentication request from the first data processing agent to a second data processing agent to authenticate the user;

authenticating the user at the second data processing agent;

if the user is successfully authenticated, storing a timeout value indicative of a predetermined time period;

determining whether the predetermined time period is exceeded starting from a time of receipt of the first service request; and

if the predetermined time period is exceeded without receiving a second service request from the user, requiring the user to be authenticated at the second data processing agent upon receipt of the second service request.

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6. The method of claim 5, further including the steps of receiving the second service request from the user, and determining whether the predetermined time period is exceeded starting from the time of receipt of the second service request.

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7. The method of claim 5, further including the steps of receiving the second service request from the user at the first data processing agent, transmitting a message from the first data processing agent to the second data processing agent including a notification that the second service request is received, receiving the notification at the second data processing agent, and determining whether the predetermined time period is exceeded starting from the time of receipt of the notification.

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8. A system for authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, the system comprising:

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a server including a first data processing agent for receiving service requests from the user and a second data processing agent for authenticating the user,

5 wherein the first data processing agent includes resources for submitting an authentication request to the second data processing agent to authenticate the user,

10 wherein the second data processing agent includes resources for receiving the authentication request, attempting to authenticate the user, storing a timeout value indicative of a predetermined time period if the user is successfully authenticated, and determining whether the predetermined time period is exceeded starting from a time of receipt of a first service request at the first data processing agent, and

15 wherein the first data processing agent further includes resources for requiring the user to be re-authenticated at the second data processing agent upon receipt of a second service request if the predetermined time period is exceeded before the second service request is  
20 received.

25 9. A method of authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, comprising the steps of:

receiving a service request from the user at a first data processing agent;

30 submitting an authentication request from the first data processing agent to a second data processing agent to authenticate the user;

authenticating the user at the second data processing agent;

if the user is successfully authenticated at the second data processing agent, storing user authentication  
5 information at the first data processing agent;

receiving a next service request from the user at the first data processing agent;

authenticating the user at the first data processing agent using the stored information; and

10 if the user is successfully authenticated at the first data processing agent, providing the requested service to the user.

10. The method of claim 9, further including the step of,  
15 if the user is not successfully authenticated at the first data processing agent, submitting an authentication request from the first data processing agent to the second data processing agent to authenticate the user.

20 11. A system for authenticating a user of a client computer at a server computer executing a distributed application on a plurality of data processing agents, the system comprising:

a server including a first data processing agent for  
25 receiving a service request and a second data processing agent for authenticating the user,

wherein the first data processing agent includes resources for submitting an authentication request to the second data processing agent to authenticate the user,  
30 storing user authentication information if the user is

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. SYNER-161XX  
WEINGARTEN, SCHURGIN,  
GAGNEBIN & HAYES, LLP  
TEL. (617) 542-2290  
FAX. (617) 451-0313